JUMP START!

A TASTE OF WHAT'S NEW IN JAPAN

# MONONOFU

BY HARUTO IKEZAWA

CONSULTANT: TAKAAKI HASHIMOTO

## GAME 2: HANGING PAWN

*Book: Shogi Problem Drills: Beginner Level

THINKING HE CAN AIM FOR PRO LEVEL AT THIS POINT IS JUST RECKLESS.
HE'D HAVE TO HAVE JOINED THE SHOUREI ASSOCIATION BY MIDDLE SCHOOL AT THE ABSOLUTE LATEST.

HOW GOES THE STUDYING?
SHINOBU-CHAAAN...
AH...
THAT'S NOT THE ISSUE HERE...
STOP BEING SUCH A WIMP... PERSONALLY, I THINK HE'S BRAVE.
HE'S NOT LISTENING.
So that's it!
I'VE BEEN READING UP ON PAWNS ALL MORNING!
I REALLY LIKE THIS "HANGING PAWN" THING.
IT'S A PAWN YOU DROP IN THE HOPES OF PROMOTING IT TO A TOKIN!!!
Pawn
THIS IS BAD...
BAD...
THAT'S NOT THE KIND OF STUDYING I MEANT!!
ATTITUDE
SINCE IT REMINDS ME OF MYSELF, I'M ALL ABOUT THE
HANGING PAWN!!!
HANGING PAWN!!!

HELLO? THIS IS KAYANE MANOR.
KLIK

R R R
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE SAID HE WANTS TO GO PRO...
...IS WHAT I'D NORMALLY SAY, BUT...
Have confidence and do your best!
AS A TUTOR ...

I HOPE MY FOOLISH SON ISN'T CAUSING TOO MUCH TROUBLE
SH-SHINOBU-KUN'S FATHER?!
NOT AT ALL!! HE'S A FINE BOY..

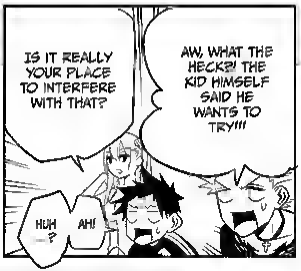
I'M SHINOBU TAKARA'S FATHER.

...
SLAM
SHINOBU-CHAN.

KLIK
...HE DOESN'T PICK UP ANY STRANGE HABITS.
PLEASE DO YOUR BEST TO MAKE SURE...

...SHOGI FOR YOU!!!
NO MORE...
HUH?!
BAM

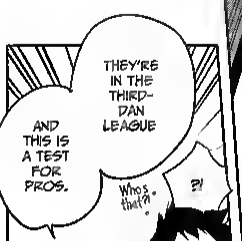
TAKE SOME RESPONSIBILITY, GUYS
THIS IS SHINOBU-CHAN'S LIFE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT.


IS IT REALLY YOUR PLACE TO INTERFERE WITH THAT?
AW, WHAT THE HECK?! THE KID HIMSELF SAID HE WANTS TO TRY!!!
HUH--?
AH!

TUD

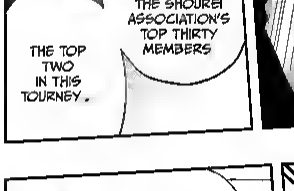
YEAH, I KNOW...
GET THAT YOU'RE CONCERNED, BUT WE'D BETTE-- GET GOING.
YASU-KANE...

OF ALL PEOPLE, YOU BUNCH SURELY KNOW...
...WHAT IT MEANS TO AIM FOR THE PROS?
?

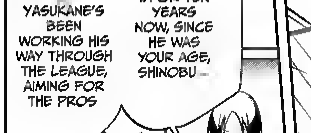

THEY'RE IN THE THIRD-DAN LEAGUE
AND THIS IS A TEST FOR PROS.
Who's that?!
?!

SHAK

IT'S A LEAGUE BATTLE HELD TWICE A YEAR FOR THE SHOUREI ASSOCIATION'S TOP THIRTY MEMBERS
THE TOP TWO IN THIS TOURNEY.


YASUKANE'S BEEN WORKING HIS WAY THROUGH THE LEAGUE, AIMING FOR THE PROS
..FOR TEN YEARS NOW, SINCE HE WAS YOUR AGE, SHINOBU...

Who knows...
Why'll we see today?
...MAKE IT TO FOURTH-DAN. THEY BECOME PROS.
ONLY TWO?!
EVERY SIX MONTHS...


HEY, KAZUKI.
FOR TEN YEARS ...?!

AND IF YOU CAN'T GO PRO BEFORE THE AGE OF 26, YOU'RE AUTOMATICALLY KICKED OUT
A WHOLE LIFE DEDICATED TO SHOGI...
...WILL BE FOR NOTHING.
...JUST TO HELP ME OUT?
AND HE TOOK TIME
ALL RIGHT WE'LL BE BACK.
YASUKANE'S GOT HIS OWN STRUGGLES
SORRY ABOUT ALL THAT LEAVE SHINOBU TO ME—
KIN-CHAN, YOU JUST CONCENTRATE ON YOUR MATCHES!
RIGHT
THANKS
KCHAK

TIME TO LEARN, SHINOBU!!
HUHHH?!
BAM
YOU GOT OUT OF PARTICIPATING IN THE TOILET KING CHAMPIONSHIP YESTERDAY
ARE YOU REALLY THAT BRAIN-LESS?
YOU'RE STILL GOING ON ABOUT THAT?!
BUT I'M NOT ALLOWED TO PLAY SHOGI ANY—
DUMMY !!
EVEN IF EVERYONE TELLS YOU NOT TO FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS
..ARE YOU REALLY GONNA LISTEN TO 'EM?!
!!
DO YOU WANNA DO IT OR NOT?
THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS!!
...!!

JUST HERE TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T PICK ON THE NEW GUY
I SEE WE HAVE AN AUDIENCE AFTER ALL?
YES... I DO!!
BUT YOU'RE ACTUALLY INTER-ESTED, RIGHT?
YOU WOULD SAY THAT
THIS ISN'T LIKE YESTER-DAY'S SHOGI PROB-LEMS
YES..
YOU GOT THE RULES DOWN?
INTERESTED IN THAT STRENGTH SHINOBU SHOWED US YESTERDAY!
GIVE THE KID A HANDICAP!
YOU'RE MAKING HIM PLAY AN EVEN MATCH?!
GAH..
?
THIS IS A REAL, OPEN-ENDED GAME!

SILVERS AND GOLDS ARE LUXURIES WASTED ON YOU, KEISHI.
DAMN YOU...!!
ACK!
YOU DON'T NEED LANCES.
YOU GET JUST TEN PIECES.
BAM
...THE KING...
...AND PAWNS ?!
JUST...

...
...THIS HARDLY SEEMS LIKE A FAIR MATCH ...
KIK
EVEN IF I'M A TOTAL NOVICE ...
UH..
WHATEVER HERE WE GO
SHF

I CAN'T...
... CAPTURE HIS KING?!
みしっ
KREAK
HUH?
OH...
HE'S BAD AT LOOKING AT THE BIG PICTURE.
...
NO, WAIT!! CALM DOWN, IT'S JUST ONE PIECE...
DAMMIT! HE GOT MY SILVER!
HUH?!
CLICK
...
AT THIS RATE MY HANDICAP WON'T MEAN ANYTHING!
RIGHT... HE CAN USE THE PIECES THAT HE'S CAPTURED.
あああああああああ
AHHHHHH
HUH?
KOAK

*Tsumi means "checkmate" a situation where one's king can't be saved

ONE MORE TIME.
CAN WE PLAY AGAIN?
THAT WAS SO FUN.
TRMBL
IT'S NOTHING LIKE A SHOGI PROBLEM ...
KLAK
...WHEN YOU'VE GOT A REAL OPPONENT !!
IF I GET MY BISHOP PRO-MOTED
!
SNAP
OH.
CAN'T LET YOU DO THAT.
GRIN

KLIK
OH.
IT WORKED?!
OH SHOULD I RETREAT?
NICE!! AT THIS RATE
HOW ABOUT THIS, THEN?!
IT WAS A TRAP!!
HEH HEH
LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE HAVING FUN
IS IT JUST ME? OR IS HE ACTUALLY PLAYING BETTER—?
BAM
I'M TOO BUSY FOR THIS.
THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO SAY
...HE'S WAITING FOR MY ANSWER.
BUT HERE...
KLIK
I WAS JUST THINKING
WAIT...
HE TAKES FOREVER TO ANSWER ANYTHING
THIS IS A CONVERSATION.

THIS IS...
HE'S ...
...FACING ME...
...WITH ALL HIS STRENGTH.
...SHOGI!!
I CAN MANAGE THIS, NO SWEAT !!
NO... KEISHI'S ALREADY
HE'S REALLY DIGGING IN NOW..
オオオオオオオ
WHOOSH
I SEE MYSELF IN THEM.
THAT'S WHY I LIKE PAWNS !!

BAM

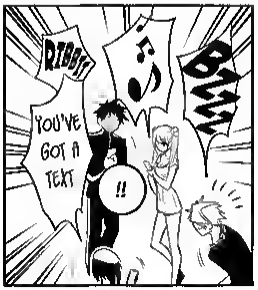
*Note: Both piece are pawns
A HANGING PAWN!!

IT'S THE STRONGEST PIECE!
...GIVE HIM AN EDGE!
SO I CAN'T ACCIDENTALLY...
EVEN IF A TOKIN GETS TAKEN, ALL HE GETS IS AN ORDINARY PAWN.
...
IT'S A TOKIN ATTACK.
KLIK
KLAK
AN INSTANT REPLY?! LEAVING HIS ROOK TO GET TAKEN?!
OR DID HE READ MY MOVES?!
...
THIS BURST, RIGHT AT THE END.
HE'S LIKE AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT PLAYER!
HOPING TO CORNER ME?!
HE'S GOT HIS EYE ON NOTHING BUT MY KING AT THIS POINT.
さわ
WHOOSH
THE STRENGTH HE SHOWED US WITH THE SHOGI PROBLEMS YESTERDAY...
THE PURITY WITH WHICH HE'S READING THE BOARD NOW...
HIS SHOGI SKILLS...

HE'S A GENUINE KING KILLER.
...ARE STRONG-EST AT THE ENDGAME.

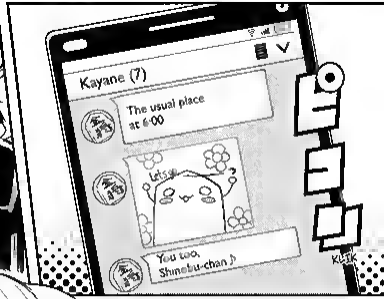
HUH?
IT'S MY LOSS...
...
THERE'S NO DOUBT!

I WO—
OW?!
GAHH-HHH-HH!
HOW OBNOXIOUS
PINCH
HUHHH?!
KNOWING NOTHING OF THE STANDARD STRATEGIES
THIS BEGINNER CAME THIS FAR ON PURE ABILITY?!
DUHUHUH
GRIND
...
DON'T GET COCKY JUST BECAUSE YOU WON.
THAT TEN-MAN HANDICAP MEANS THIS MATCH WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A JOKE
OH, RIGHT
I KNOW THAT
WELL
IF YOU LEARN SOME ACTUAL STRATEGY
YOU MIGHT JUST IMPROVE
STOP TAKING NOTES!!
Actual strategy...
Might just might!
SHINOBU
SO WHAT ABOUT THE TOILET CLEANING?
YOU'RE DOING IT.
SLAP


BUZZ
RTBOX
YOU'VE GOT A TEXT
!!

I THINK YOU ACTUALLY WANTED TO DO THIS. YOU'RE JUST ONE BIG MASOCHIST
YOU REALIZE HOW PATHETIC YOU LOOK RIGHT NOW, KEISHI?
Okay.
HURRY IT UP I'VE GOT TO GO
ゴシ
SCRUB
Don't bother.
LEAVE THIS TO A REAL PRO
UM. LET ME HELP TOO...
Okay.
ゴシ
SCRUB

Kuru Sushi
?
THIS MEANS WE'RE CELEBRATING! LET'S HEAD OUT!!
THOSE TWO MUST'VE WON


Kayane (7)
The usual place at 6:00
Let's go!
You too, Shmebu-chan ♪
ピコン
KLEIK

ポン!
DING
I HAD TO FIGHT TOOTH AND NAIL.
BOY, IT WAS KIND OF A CLOSE ONE.
AFTER TEN YEARS, PEOPLE KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOU.

わい
GAS
わい
GAR
わい
GAS
わい
GAS
YOU'LL NEVER BECOME A PRO WITH SUCH LOW STANDARDS
CAN YOU GRAB A SALMON FOR ME TOO, GINGA-SAN?
OH!
NOM NOM NOM NOM NOM
ANYWAY, I'VE FINALLY GOT MORE WINS THAN LOSSES
IT WAS ONLY YOUR OPPONENT'S BLUNDER THAT SAVED YOU
HM?
THIS THING IS RIGGED! TWENTY LATES IN A ROW NOT A SINGLE WINNER!
...
HUH?
HOW'D IT GO?
I HAVE TO APOLOGIZE FOR SOMETHING.
Ugh
UM..
YASUKANE-SAN, I...

IT'S FINE.
BUT HOW'D IT GO?
...
DIDN'T YOU PLAY TODAY?

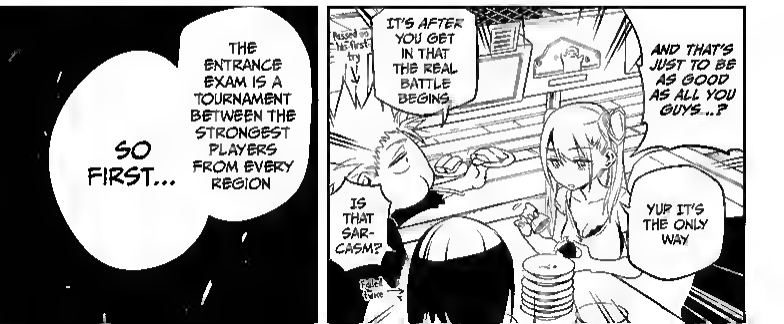
I... HAD A TON OF FUN!!
MORE...


...THAN I CAN EVEN EXPRESS.

YOU'RE 25 ALREADY
IF YOU WON'T INHERIT THE FAMILY BUSINESS, THEN GET OUT
ENOUGH OF THESE CHILDISH DREAMS
BUT FROM THE VERY START...
...I NEVER HAD THE RIGHT TO STOP YOU...

YOU REALLY SHOULD HAVE QUIT... IF ME TELLING YOU WAS ENOUGH TO STOP YOU
I'VE DONE MY DUTY AND SAID MY PIECE

I'M GIVING YOU A HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT.
BUT!!
IN THAT CASE...
THE SHOUREI ASSOCIATION IS THE GATEWAY TO THE PROS AND TO GET INTO THAT...
...YOU NEED ENOUGH SKILL TO COMPETE WITH TOP-CLASS NATIONAL AMATEURS


SO FIRST...
THE ENTRANCE EXAM IS A TOURNAMENT BETWEEN THE STRONGEST PLAYERS FROM EVERY REGION
Passed on the first try
IT'S AFTER YOU GET IN THAT THE REAL BATTLE BEGINS
AND THAT'S JUST TO BE AS GOOD AS ALL YOU GUYS..?
IS THAT SAR-CASM?
YUP IT'S THE ONLY WAY
Failed twice

BECOME THE BEST IN TOKYO.
ONLY THEN...
...CAN YOU EVEN STAND AT THE GATES.

ONCE A PIECE IS PROMOTED, THERE'S NO GOING BACK.
CAREFUL, SHINOBU-CHAN!!
ONE WATER PLEASE.
Kuru Sushi
I'LL DO IT !!
YOU GOT GINGER ALL OVER ME
WASABI!!!!
HEY, COME ON...
I THINK YOU BROKE IT NOW ALL THE CAPSULE TOYS ARE COMING OUT.
AND WITH HIS FIRST STEP...
...THIS PAWN'S BATTLE BEGINS.
*Tokin (Promoted Pawn)

TO BE CONTINUED...